

2006 TIP Interim Assessment Report on Trafficking in Persons

Greece

The Government of Greece has shown modest progress in combating trafficking in persons during the reporting period. Key reforms the government pledged to undertake await finalization and implementation. The government has demonstrated a strong willingness to increase its efforts; however, this willingness has yet to translate into concrete improvements in victim protection or penalties for traffickers.

On November 29, the Government of Greece completed and signed a “Memorandum of Cooperation” with 12 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This agreement formalizes cooperation between the government and NGOs to create a more effective screening and referral mechanism for the government and NGOs to identify and refer victims. In September 2005, the government forwarded the final draft of the Greece-Albania protocol on child repatriation to the Albanian government. The negotiation of the protocol has been underway for several years, but has yet to be finalized. In an effort to increase both public awareness and victim referrals, the Secretariat General for Gender Equality produced a campaign including a television advertisement to be aired later this year. In November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the support of IOM, inaugurated a formal diplomatic working group comprised of source, transit, and destination country diplomatic representatives focused on prevention and protection strategies. In December, the Greek government committed \$600,000 in funding over a three-year period for the Transnational Action Against Child Trafficking (TACT) project in Albania in cooperation with USAID.

The government issued 22 special residence permits to trafficking victims during the first six months of 2005. Although the government continues to actively arrest and investigate traffickers (162 for the first six months of 2005), it is unclear to what extent these efforts resulted in convictions and actual jail time, or the extent of protection and assistance offered to victims found in raids. The government identified and offered protection to 79 victims of trafficking during the first six months of 2005, however only 11 victims accepted and were provided shelter. The significant gap between estimated number of trafficking victims in Greece (in the thousands) and the number of those who are identified illustrates the urgent need for a formalized and effective screening and referral mechanism, yet to be operationalized in Greece. The government continues to co-sponsor training seminars and conferences for law enforcement officials on their role in screening and referring potential victims, but NGOs have yet to obtain a more institutionalized role in assisting potential victims discovered by law enforcement.

For an article in Greek from the local media that illustrates the problems facing trafficking victims in Greece, click on the following links:

<http://www.usembassy.gr/svetiagr.pdf> (Greek Text)

<http://www.usembassy.gr/svetia.pdf> (English Text)